

DEMOCRATIC GERMAN REPORT

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"GERMANS TOO AT BERLIN"

GROTEWOHL AND MALENKOV MEET

Otto Grotewohl, Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic, was received on December 16th in Moscow by G. M. Malenkov, Prime Minister of the Soviet Union.

Soviet Foreign Minister V. M. Molotov and other leading Soviet personalities attended the meeting.

"I Don't Want to be a Soldier"

A growing proportion of West Germans do not want to become soldiers, despite intensive war propaganda.

The West German Public Opinion Research "EMNID", in Bielefeld, British Zone, has just published figures showing that in October 1952, 46 persons from every hundred said "NO" to the question: "Would you be willing to serve as a soldier, or to allow your near relations to serve."

By October 1953, the proportion had grown to 53 per hundred.

Did You Know?

That German soldiers under SS Officers are being incorporated as fighting units in the American forces in West Germany?

That 70,000 Germans in uniform serve with British forces in West Germany?

That huge U. S. arms dumps for the West German Wehrmacht have been established at many places?

That the German General Staff is back in existence, headed by men who planned the blitz on England?

That 250 new barracks are being built for West German soldiers?

That the "Hermann Goering Parachutists" meet regularly and publicly in West Germany?

Read all about this new armed threat to world peace on page 2 of this issue.

- East German Proposal

Representatives of East and West Germany should take part in the Foreign Ministers' Conference pending in Berlin, the Government of the German Democratic Republic proposed on December 16th.

The proposal was made by Acting Prime Minister Walter Ulbricht, in the course of an official Government declaration to the East German parliament urging:

1. That representatives of the German Democratic Republic and West Germany should take part in the discussions of the German problem at the Foreign Ministers' Conference in Berlin.

2. That the Conference should discuss conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany, and the restoration of German unity on the basis of democracy and peace.

(Further details of East German declaration on page 3)



Proud Mother Adenauer

(Drawing by Elizabeth Shaw)

WEHRMACHT IS BACK

By Albert Norden

The West German imperialists are driving ahead with the remilitarisation of West Germany, heedless of whether other nations ratify the "European Defence Community" treaties or not.

The de facto West German War Ministry, for instance, the "Blank Office" which was founded three years ago by Herr Theodor Blank and five other officials, has grown today to a monster ministry with 910 officials — the largest of all the ministries in the West German capital of Bonn.

Without waiting for the revision of the West German Constitution which is legally necessary, this War Ministry has worked out a conscription law, under which all male youths will be called up for eighteen months service.

For a start the West German army will consist of 550,000 men, of whom 360,000 will serve in the army, 80,000 in the air force, 50,000 in the navy, and the remaining 70,000 as service troops.

In addition, the job of mobilising 150,000 "volunteers" is already in full swing.

20,000 of these "volunteers" are at present being incorporated as units in the American forces in Germany, under the command of German and American officers.

As is well known, the British authorities in Germany have 70,000 uniformed members of the "German Service Organisation" serving in the British Zone, and taking part in British manoeuvres; in the American Zone there is a similar organisation known as the "Industrial Police", 60,000 strong.

The Americans have now begun to form the Industrial Police into armed fighting units of battalion strength under German command. Such battalions have been established in the towns of Esslingen and Bamberg, and at the manoeuvre grounds of Baumholder in the French Zone.

These battalions contain up to 85 % of former SS officers and men.

Huge dumps of arms and equipment for the new Wehrmacht have also been prepared by the Americans in the French Zone. Such depots are situated at Einsiedelshof and Pirmasens. In the U. S. Zones there are dumps at the tank depot in Karls-

The author of this authoritative article on the progress of rearmament in West Germany is a prominent publicist who has devoted himself to a study of contemporary developments in West Germany.

feld, and the Luftwaffe depot near Erding.

The German general staff was abolished under the Potsdam Agreement, but it has been revived in West Germany. It is headed by General Heusinger, who in his war memoirs, published under the title "Befehl im Widerstreit", attacked Hitler bitterly for not annihilating the British Army at Dunkirk. Under him he has 180 staff officers, the great majority of whom were formerly members of Hitler's general staff.

Colonel General Stumpf, for instance, was Chief of General Staff of Hitler's Luftwaffe, and worked out the plans for the blitz on England. General Dethleffsen was head of the leadership department of the Nazi General Staff, and thus responsible for the main military operations of the Second World War.

The President of the selection committee for the appointment of officers to the new Wehrmacht is Lieutenant General Kuntzen, who commanded a tank division in the invasion of France 13 years ago.

The West German War Ministry has already requisitioned a series of former barracks in Schleswig-Holstein, Rendsburg, Kiel, Luebeck, Ulm and other places. Plans have lately been

completed for the construction of 250 new barracks, each with a capacity of between 1000 and 1200 men. Other plans call for the immediate creation of 10 large manoeuvre grounds, 20 airfields, and naval anchorages.

Another aspect of the remilitarisation in West Germany is the great increase in the activity of military associations and "veterans' organisations". A total of no less than 528 such groups are known to exist. They include groups with such Nazi names as "Legion Kondor" (veterans of Hitler's attack on the Spanish Republic); the "Third Interceptor Fighter Group Horst Wessel" (named after Nazi hero, the Berlin pimp Wessel); the "Hermann Goering Parachutists" and the "Fuehrer Grenadier Division".

The work of these groups is largely coordinated and complemented by the "Association of German Soldiers" with more than 3000 groups in almost every town and village. This association is heavily subsidised by the U. S. authorities.

As part of the propagandistic and technical preparation for a new Wehrmacht, there are more than two dozen magazines in West Germany today exclusively occupied with military themes. The number is actually greater than it was under Hitler. Many of these periodicals appear under the same title and with the same editor as during the Nazi regime.

The "Wehrtechnische Hefte" for instance, a highly technical military magazine for staff officers, stresses its identity with the Hitlerite paper of the same name. The September 1953 issue of the paper stated that its aim was to "give the fullest information on technical military developments at home and abroad".

Atomic Weapons for Nazis

The new West German army, which will be commanded by Nazi generals, will receive atomic weapons from the United States, the West German financial newspaper "Industriekurier" of Duesseldorf, British Zone, stated on December 15th.

The French and British representatives on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation had approved an American proposal to this effect, the newspaper stated.

"The purposes of the occupation of Germany... are:

The complete disarmament and demilitarisation of Germany... all German land, naval and air forces... shall be completely and finally abolished in such a manner as permanently to prevent the revival or reorganisation of German militarism and nazism. The maintenance and production of all aircraft and all arms, ammunition and implements of war shall be prevented."

Potsdam Declaration, signed
August 2nd 1945 by
J. V. Stalin, Harry S. Truman,
C. R. Attlee.

GAINS FOR E. GERMAN WORKERS

Wages, Pensions Up: More Union Control

Big improvements in wages for hundred of thousands of workers, better health care, bigger pensions and more rights for trade union representatives were features of a decree issued by the East German Government on December 10th.

Main features of the decree included the following:

1. WAGES

The wages of skilled workers in the nationally owned engineering, power, chemical, building and wood-working industries, and in light industry generally, will be considerably increased from the beginning of 1954. Details of the raises will be published later.

These increases will restore the extra margin for skill which had be-

come small following recent large wage increases for unskilled workers.

Trade unions will be encouraged to demand similar increases in privately owned industry.

2. HOURS OF WORK

Laws on the limitation of overtime will be rigidly observed: no worker may work more than 120 hours overtime per year, and overtime work will only be permitted with the agreement of the trade union concerned.

3. HEALTH

One hundred million marks will be used during 1954 to extend the present system of factory clinics: regular medical inspections will become compulsory in all industries endangering health.

Before April 1954 trade union officials and the responsible ministries shall work out a list of industries of particular danger to health, and a shortened work-day shall be introduced in such industries.

Labour safety rules are to be tightened up, and trade union representatives to be given more powers to insist upon safety measures.

4. PENSIONS

Workers in important branches of industry will receive 5% of their retiring wage as additional pension, after working in the same factory for 20 years. This additional pension scheme will be extended to other branches of industry as soon as the financial position allows.

5. HOUSING

The sum of 764 million marks will be provided from state funds during 1954 for housing, and big credits will be granted to workers wishing to build their own homes. Building plots will be provided free for such houses.

6. OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

Transport congestion to and from factories will be relieved by the provision of 700 new buses and 350 new railway carriages during 1954.

Canteens in factories employing over 200 persons will in future provide special diet dishes.

A new medal "Banner of Labour" will be struck to mark special achievements in production.

The work of factory clubhouses and libraries will be improved, and leading theatre groups, choirs etc will make regular factory visits.

Special "Industrial Institutes" will be developed at the universities. These institutes will provide higher education for workers who have risen from the work-bench to posts as factory directors and department heads. Students aged up to 50 will be accepted, and their full wages will continue to be paid during their course of study.

One of the most important points of the new decree was that in all fields the trade unions were given more of a say than has hitherto been the case. In almost all the advances summarised above, trade union representatives will have far-reaching rights of decision.

"BERLIN CONFERENCE MUST PREVENT MILITARISM"

The Potsdam Conference in 1945 marked the end of Hitlerite fascism, and the Berlin conference in 1954 must prevent a revival of German militarism and fascism, the East German Acting Prime Minister Walter Ulbricht told the East German Parliament on December 16th.

"We hope that the Berlin Conference will prevent the so-called 'European Defence Community', and the treaties of Bonn and Paris, from drawing a frontline right across Europe" he stated.

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic, for its part, will do everything possible to ensure that the conference in Berlin is conducted in an atmosphere of peace and democracy.

"The most important contribution that we can make towards the success of the Berlin Conference is to establish an atmosphere of peace in the whole of Germany. This can be done by combatting every form of revenge propaganda, by opposing the 'European Defence Community' which leads to war, by preventing the distribution of militarist and fascist literature, and dissolving the fascist military organisations in West Germany and West Berlin.

"Allegations that our proposals mean a 'neutralisation of Germany' are not true. A united, peaceable democratic Germany, possessing mili-

tary forces as laid down in a peace treaty, and with frontiers guaranteed by the signatories to the peace treaty would be able to pursue an independent foreign policy according with the interests of the German people.

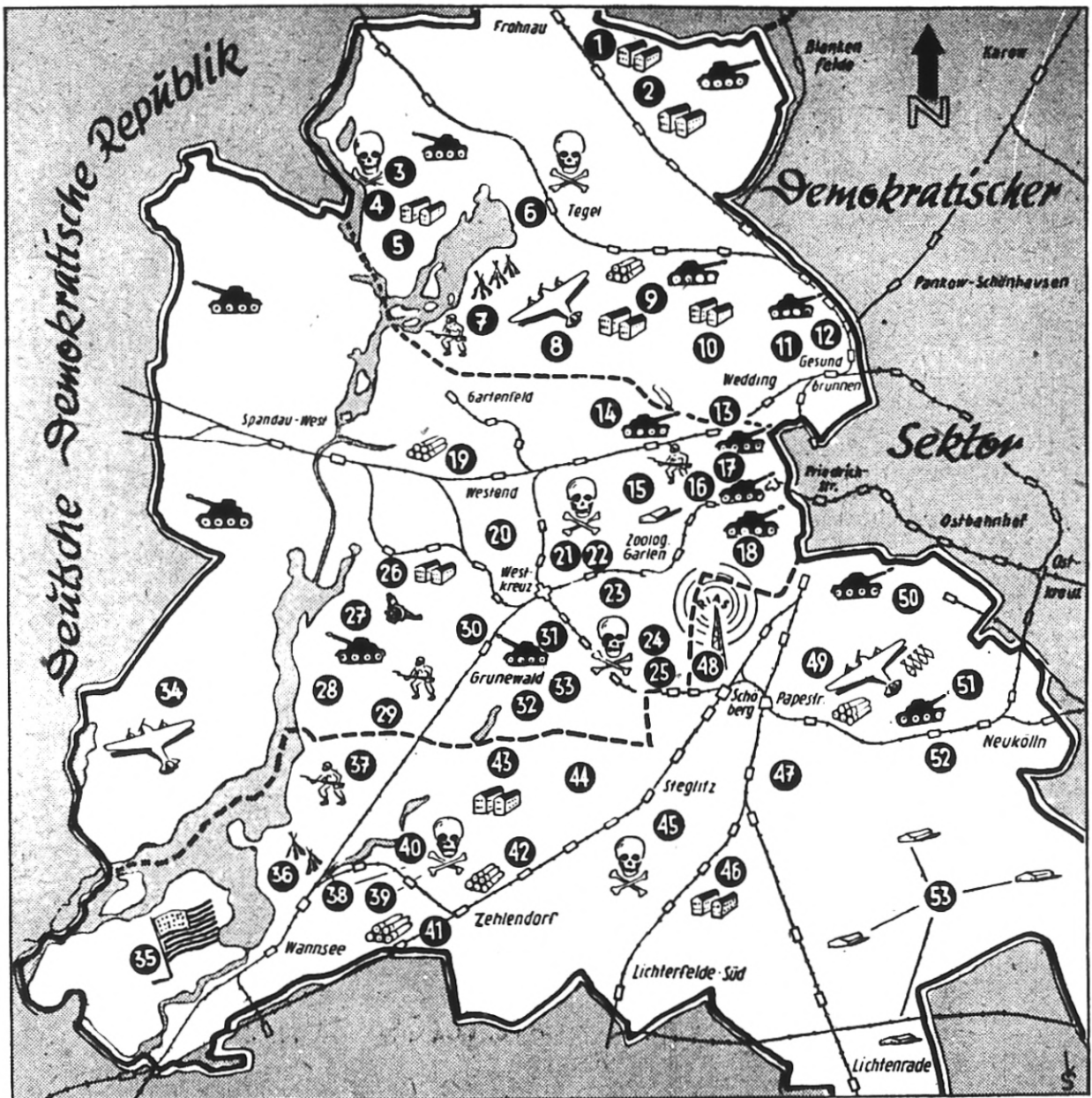
"The Government of the German Democratic Republic notes with indignation that the Adenauer Government in West Germany not only refuses to take part in negotiations between representatives of the German Democratic Republic and West Germany, but also does everything possible to make more difficult the success of the Four Power Conference.

"Adenauer and his government of monopolists have made the proposal that the Berlin Conference should include the whole of Germany in the Atlantic War Pact; and in addition his government is taking steps to include measures for the militarisation of West Germany in the West German Constitution during the course of the Berlin Conference.

"Every German can see for himself where the enemies of peace are situated.

"The German question can be peacefully settled through the establishment of an All-German Provisional Government, and the preparation of free all-German elections."

WEST BERLIN – WAR CENTRE

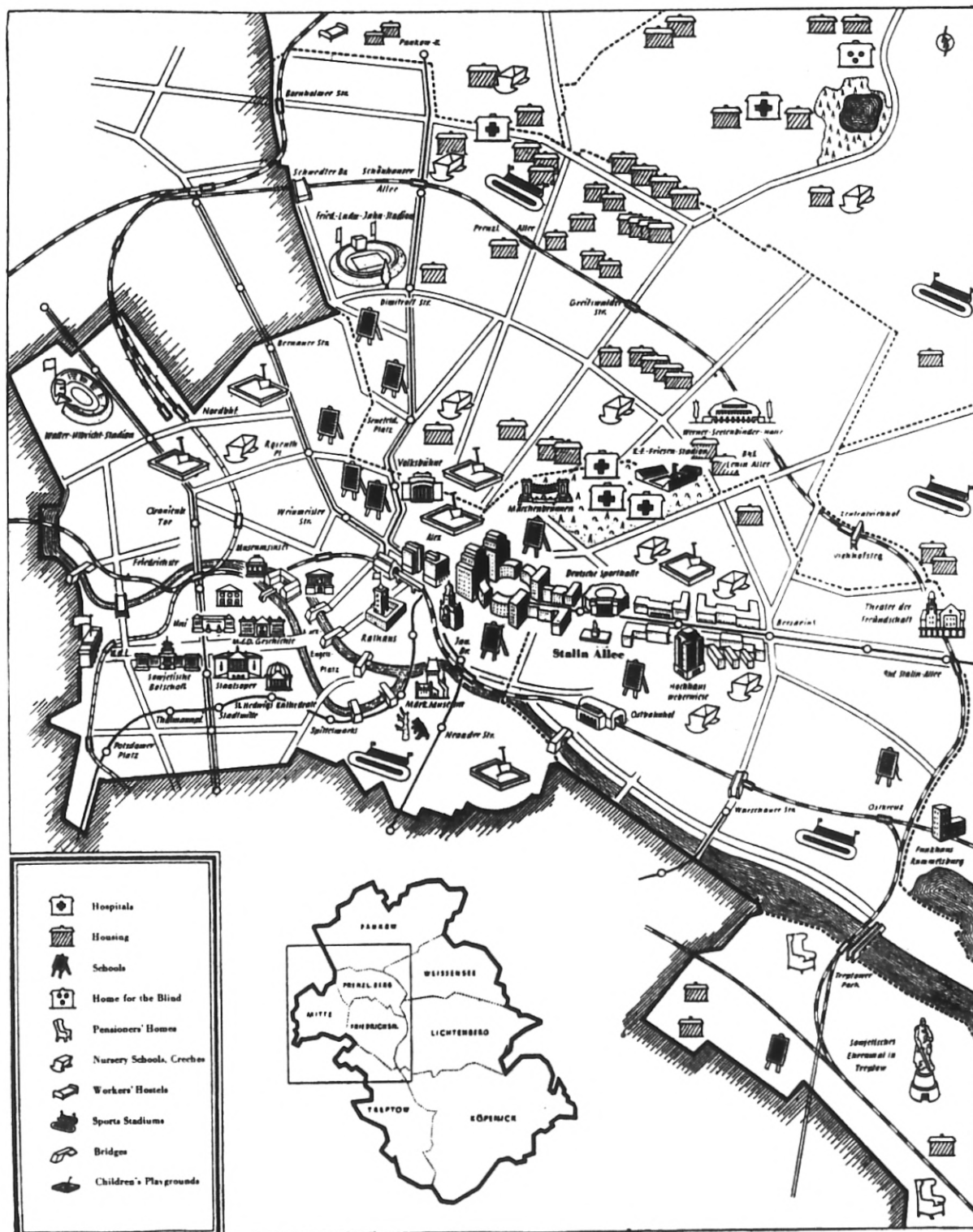


1. 2. French Barracks.
3. Reinforced Tank Road.
4. "Fighting Group of German Youth" Training School for Terrorists.
5. Barracks.
6. District Headquarters of "Fighting Group of German Youth".
7. Rifle Range.
8. Military Airfield.
9. Napoleon Barracks.
10. Barracks.
11. No. 5 Thurneysser Strasse: Terrorist Headquarters.
12. 13. 14. Reinforced Tank Roads.
15. Camp for "Refugees" and Agents.
16. Military Training Ground.
17. Reinforced Tank Road.
18. Bridge Reinforced for Heavy Tanks.
19. Ammunition Depot.
20. No. 81 Hohenzollern Damm: "Association of Political Refugees from the East".
21. No. 11 Dernburger Strasse: Terrorist Headquarters of "Fighting Group of German Youth".

22. Kuno Fischer Strasse: "Refugee Centre".
23. No. 106 Kurfuerstendamm: "Fighting Group Against Inhumanity" Laboratories, Workshops for Bombs, Incendiary Cartridges, etc.
24. No. 156 Bundes Allee: "Committee for the Liberation of the Victims of Totalitarian Injustice".
25. No. 16 Bernhard Strasse: District Office of "Fighting Group of German Youth".
26. Barracks of "Voluntary Labour Service" (Para-military Organisation).
27. Artillery Positions.
28. Tank and Mortar Ground.
29. Manoeuvre Ground.
30. British Tank Camp.
29. Manoeuvrer Ground.
30. British Tank Camp.
31. No. 1 Bismarck Platz: Recruiting Centre for Agents.
32. Camp for "Political Refugees".
33. No. 4 Reich Strasse: "Eastern Bureau of the Christian Democrats".

34. Gatow Military Airfield.
35. Wannsee: American Military Headquarters.
36. American Rifle Range.
37. Manoeuvre Ground.
38. No. 2 Ernst Ring Strasse: "Fighting Group Against Inhumanity".
39. Salz Strasse: American Espionage Centre.
40. No. 29 Lima Strasse: "Investigating Committee of Free Jurists".
41. 42. 43. 44. Ammunition Depot.
45. District Office of "Fighting Group Against Inhumanity".
46. Barracks.
47. District Office of "Fighting Group of German Youth".
48. "RIAS": American Radio which directs Agents in East Germany.
49. Tempelhof Military Airfield.
50. 51. 52. Reinforced Tank Road.
53. "Refugee Camps": Here American Instructors train Sabotage Gangs.

EAST BERLIN – PEACEFUL CAPITAL



The symbols on this map represent post-war building projects completed or nearing completion. The map shows only the central portion of East Berlin, on about three times the scale of the West Berlin Map

FACTS ON DEMOCRATIC BERLIN: SEE PAGE 6

Facts & Figures on East Berlin

Building

During the last five years East Berlin has been one vast building site. From 1945 to 1948 four million tons of rubble were cleared. Ten million tons were cleared between 1948 and 1953, the speed-up being partly due to the fact that from January 2nd 1952 onwards on the average 2,612 volunteers every evening have been clearing up in the Stalin Allee site alone.

With the help of voluntary savings and participation in the Reconstruction Lottery, in which about 1.2 million people in East Germany and East Berlin took part, about 110 million marks were made available for the Reconstruction Programme in East Berlin alone.

Amongst the restored buildings are the State Opera, the Museum for German History, the old Town Hall, two multi-storey buildings on the Alexander Platz, thousands of new and repaired flats in the Stalin Allee and in other districts, the German Sport Palace, three big stadiums, a giant swimming pool, 21 out of the 42 bridges which were either damaged or totally destroyed by bombing, schools and kindergartens and the Pioneer Park and the big children's home on the outskirts of the city.

For the rebuilding of the Marienkirche, Hedwigskirche and other fine old churches 1,230,000 marks have been provided since 1949.

Schools and Kindergartens

19 schools and 9 kindergartens have been newly built in East Berlin since 1948; teaching in shifts will in a short time be a thing of the past.

The number of children in kindergartens and creches has risen, from 9,564 in 1949 to 18,000 in 1953.

In 1953 30% of all East Berlin children leaving elementary school entered senior school, and of these 52% were children of workers or peasants.

In 1950 only 40,000 children could be sent to summer day camps. In 1953 the figure had risen to 122,000.

Industry

At the end of 1953 there were 250 nationally owned factories in East Berlin, employing a total of 120,000 workers. A further 13,000 workers come within the nationally owned sector of industry on January 1st, 1954, when three big Soviet owned factories are handed over to the German administration.

Production in nationally owned concerns in East Berlin in 1953 was two and a half times as high as in 1949.

The value of production in the electrical industry has risen two and a half times, in engineering three and a quarter times, in the food and confectionary industry three times and in the clothing and leather industry it has doubled in the same period.

Despite enormous obstacles, the total volume of all industrial output—nationally owned, cooperative and private—was nearly half as much again in 1953 as in the last normal peace year, 1936.

Culture

Of the 97,000 theatre season tickets sold in East Berlin, half were bought by factory workers.

In 1948 there were 102 Folk Art Groups and in 1953 there were 428, to which 10,000 workers belonged.

Membership of sports clubs rose from 26,000 in 1949 to 45,000 in 1953.

Health

The number of hospital beds increased from 14,400 in 1948 to 17,800 in 1953 and will further increase

when the big new general hospital in Friedrichshain opens in 1954.

The number of doctors in East Berlin has increased from 1308 in 1948 to 2039 in 1953. There are 28 works clinics which take care of 430,000 workers.

Five times as much per person was spent in 1953 on medical care as was spent in 1936.

Standard of Living

Prices of rationed food stuffs remain the same as in 1948. Bread, fish and cereals have come off the ration without price increase and the rations of fats and meat have been considerably increased. Charges for gas, electricity and water, rents and fares remain the same. Prices of non-rationed foodstuffs and clothing have been reduced thirteen times since 1948, and wages are on the average 20% higher than in 1949.

Other favourable influences on the standard of living are free school tuition and textbooks, scholarships and living allowances for students, cheap holidays for workers and children in some of the most beautiful hotels and resorts in East Germany, and free medical attendance.

"PLEASE HELP US"

German Peace Movement Appeals to Neighbours

Germany's neighbours should help the German people to create a united democratic Germany, stated a resolution passed by the All-German Peace Congress held in Weimar, German Democratic Republic from December 10th to 12th.

"Such a Germany would serve peace, do away with tension in Europe, and ensure the security of Germany's neighbours" the resolution stated.

"We German men and women understand the serious concern which the revival of German militarism causes to Germany's neighbours. Their concern is our concern.

"We feel it to be our duty to lay before the coming conference of the Four Great Powers, in Berlin, the longing of the whole German people for the restoration of German unity and a peace treaty guaranteeing the peaceful and democratic development of our homeland."

TRADE WITH FRANCE, GREECE

East Germany will get wine, wool, coffee and many other goods from France under the trade agreement signed in Berlin on December 9th, 1953. East Germany will deliver machinery, optical instruments, porcelain, etc., in exchange. The trade

will be worth over \$ 8 million in 1954.

Greece will send pyrites, citrus fruits, tobacco and other products to East Germany in exchange for optical instruments, artificial fertilisers, porcelain, etc. under the agreement signed on December 8th, 1953.

AN M.P. SEES EAST GERMANY

By Emrys Hughes, M.P.

I was surprised to find how normal East Berlin had again become. The Russian tanks were gone and the only Russian soldiers I saw on my first days' look round were two who were in a musical instrument shop looking at the concertinas, which had been reduced in price.

Today the shops and markets have a large variety of goods which were not available in June. Everybody with whom I spoke agreed that the food situation had improved.

I saw a considerable quantity of food imported from Russia and Poland on sale. Russian tinned salmon and crab and other tinned fish from Poland seemed to have arrived in substantial quantities.

What the Germans in the East seemed to be buying most were technical textbooks, especially those dealing with engineering and architecture. There is a good selection of children's books, but there is a ban on American thrillers and comic strips. At a children's club I found that a boy who bought six comic strips on sale in the West was given a beautifully illustrated Grimm's Fairy Tales in return.

The most popular snacks at the street kiosks seemed to be hot sausage and roll, which is the East German counterpart of our fish and chips.

The anniversary of the Russian Revolution was celebrated by a diplomatic reception at the Russian Embassy and parades, and I saw large numbers of wreaths laid on the Russian War Memorial, which is just

Mr. Emrys Hughes, Labour Member of Parliament for South Ayrshire, Scotland, paid a visit to East Germany in November 1953. We quote some of his impressions taken from a series of articles which appeared in "The Scotsman" of November 30th, December 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 7th.

inside the British Sector, near the Brandenburg Gate.

They were mostly from organisations, Trade Unions and youth clubs from East Berlin, though there were one or two from the West. Not only were there large wreaths... but I noticed ordinary folk bringing small bunches of flowers on which there was no inscription, and laying them on the steps.

There are many Russian war memorials scattered up and down East Germany, which testify to how fierce and merciless the fighting was. The ages on the plaques revealed how very young were the Russian soldiers who smashed Hitler's armies in the East. I saw one on the roadside near Weimar where the average age was only 19.

I saw more of the Russian soldiers in passing through the smaller towns where they are garrisoned... In some places they are billeted on the inhabitants, and I heard many stories of kindly human relationships when the soldiers had thawed and the uniform was forgotten.

I went to Leipzig primarily to discover what had happened to the book trade under a Communist Government. The attitude of the owners during the Hitler regime seemed to have been the test as to whether or not a concern should be nationalised without any compensation being paid.

About 60 per cent of the book trade in Leipzig has been nationalised, while 40 per cent remains in private hands. Only if the owners had been very actively and aggressively Nazis were their works nationalised.

One of the most important of the nationalised concerns... employs 695 workers, men and women, and turns out a very large variety of all kinds of books and prints for publishers in both East and West.

I had expected to see the collected works of Stalin, Lenin and Marx being turned out by the millions, but it was quite different.

They were producing all kinds of productions ranging from catalogues for the export trade to colour reproductions on the finest oil paper of the paintings of Leonardo da Vinci and other old masters. They were printing the Bibles and hymnaries of the German Evangelical Church...

To Dresden on two terrible days and nights in February 1945 came the full retribution of the war... Nearly nine years after, the centre of Dresden still looks like a grim wilderness. It was only in 1949 that the main streets were completely cleared.

One would have thought it impossible that human beings would ever have contemplated trying to build Dresden again, but that is exactly what is being planned. They are painfully piecing the statues together and building up the most historic buildings. They have finished the Rathaus, the Town Hall, and the State Theatre, and some of the art galleries. They were busy at work on the Catholic cathedral.

There are big blocks of flats going up in the suburbs and there has been a lot of patching up of houses where it was considered worth while. Every Sunday bands of volunteer workers go out to some bombed site to clear the sites and pile up into neat piles the bricks that are to be used again.

In East Germany all the emphasis in the propaganda is on the fact that behind Dr. Adenauer are the powerful industrialists and the ex-Generals who would re-establish a reactionary regime on Nazi or semi-Nazi lines once again.

It must not be forgotten that most of the men and women in the East German Government served terms of imprisonment in the Nazi concentration camps.

Can a really united, democratic Germany emerge in the immediate future? It would be a good thing for Europe if a neutral Germany... could take the place of the old nationalist aggressive Germany that we have fought twice in one generation. If there would be some guarantee of that, the fears of both France and Russia, and indeed of ourselves, would be allayed. For the Germans have wonderful qualities that could be used to build up a peaceful economy in Europe, but they also have a genius for war.

Democratic GERMAN REPORT

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Berlin W 8,
Germany.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Hundreds of foreign correspondents are likely to pour into Berlin in the next week or two, ready for the impending meeting of the Big Four Foreign Ministers.

I should like to advise those readers who have to rely on the big-business press for their information to brace themselves for a new flood of silly, sillier and silliest stories about East Berlin and East Germany.

Blenchers

The regular correspondents in West Berlin have strong stomachs, I admit, but even they blench at some of the wild stories which the West Berlin press and West Berlin tipsters provide.

Experience has shown that special correspondents in for a short visit lap up anything they are told, so I am confident that our "Spike That Lie" department will have plenty to do.

Much more serious than such journalistic irresponsibility, of course, are the attempts which are sure to be made by West German and West Berlin agencies to disrupt the talks.

Readers with good memories will recall that when the Foreign Ministers met in Paris in May 1949, American-financed trade union groups in West Berlin immediately staged the elevated railway strike in an attempt to cause bloodshed and break up the talks.

Perhaps it is only a coincidence, but as soon as the Western Powers accepted the Soviet suggestion of the Berlin Conference, certain groups in West Berlin started an agitation for "strong action to take over the elevated railway", which is run throughout Berlin by the East German railway authorities.

So if you see sensational stories from Berlin in the next few weeks, ask yourself: "Could that be an attempt to break up the conference?"

"Wretched" Toys

By the time readers get this paper it will be a bit late to talk about Christmas, but here is an unseasonable quote from my favourite unreliable foreign correspondent, the Honorable Terence Prittle, "Manchester Guardian" representative in Bonn.

Writing in his paper on December 14th, he stated: "Visitors to the East Berlin 'Christmas market' speak of the wretched display of toys."

It all depends on what you mean by "wretched" of course. There were no toy tanks, no atomic bomb sets, and no blood-thirsty "Comics", all of which the Hon. Terence (his real title: I am not making it up) could find in great variety in the toy shops of West Germany.

But there were any quantity of good strong attractive toys in all shapes and sizes and at all prices.

Looking back to GERMAN REPORT of December 1952, I find that I noted then that fire-engines seemed to be the hit number for boys.

A quick look round the toy-shops this year shows that fire-engines are still going strong, but tractors with all sorts of trucks and trailers are running them close.

Big toys that really work are in great demand here: the most attractive that I have seen recently is a wooden grab crane standing about four foot high, with a proper saddle for the five-year-old crane operator who will obviously spend the days following Christmas picking up all his other presents and depositing them at the other side of the room.

Useful Present

One of the "useful gifts" that adults have been giving each other here this Christmas has been the first one-volume encyclopedia published in East Germany since the war.

Anyone who thinks that this is rather a long gap should remember that every previous German encyclopedia and lexicon has been so loaded with chauvinism and ultra-nationalistic twists that it was necessary to start again almost from the very beginning.

For instance, the compilers of the new encyclopedia could generally rely on the dates of birth and death quoted in biographies in previous German reference works, but often on nothing else. Nationalistic German professors in the past had classified almost every central European of note as "German". The great Polish astronomer Kopernik (Copernicus)

was always previously described as German, but the new encyclopedia puts history straight again.

The encyclopedia not only does a good job on historic fact; it is up to the minute too, and is probably the first encyclopedia in the world to include Tensing Norkey and Sir Edmund Hillary, the conquerors of Chomolungma (Mount Everest).

"Undemocratic"

A group of young people in the American Sector of West Berlin recently organised a satirical theatre group, and put on a performance.

Since the group received a small subsidy from the city authorities, the programme presented came up for discussion in the District Council of Schoeneberg District.

And here is the report of the debate in the West Berlin evening paper "Kurier", dated December 17th:

"District Councillor Bechtloff, Christian Democrat, explained that in this playlet... (a character) should act as look-out during a burglary.

"The burglar explained that the person to be robbed was a rich man who had until now manufactured saucepans, but was now changing over to war materials. There could thus be no harm in lightening his pockets.

"District Councillor Will, Free Democrat, described this scene as a crass wounding of democratic feelings."

Offer

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